

If you are at the point in your educational career that you may consider retiring this year, this executive director update is intended to assist you as you wade through all the details that you need to consider. It also attempts to answer several questions that you may have. If you are an ATRS employer, this update is also intended to give some additional information to assist you in helping your employees as retirement season approaches. On behalf of the ATRS Board, I want to thank all 2013 retirees for your service to education in Arkansas and wish you the best in retirement. Just as when you were an active member, ATRS will be here to serve you.

Attached is a 10 page question and answer format update on things to consider and do if you are certain about or considering retiring at the end of this school year (July 1, 2013) as well as a memorandum to employers participating in ATRS that outlines the requirements for retirement and T-DROP eligibility. ATRS decided to share the memorandum to employers with everyone to give more information to members. The ATRS Board has stressed that quality and timely information to ATRS members and employers is an important ATRS Board priority. The ATRS Board remains committed to make more and better information and services available to members. ATRS staff is pleased to work on carrying out this important ATRS Board objective.

This update addresses some of the most important things to do and consider as you plan your retirement in 2013. Many of the questions and answers were included at the request of the ATRS Benefits and Counseling staff. Most of the questions are those that the B&C staff felt were most either the most important or most commonly asked questions by members considering retirement. The intent of all this information is to help clarify the steps to a smooth retirement with some directions on tailoring your benefits to fit your particular needs. Hopefully the result includes answers to many of the questions that a potential retiree has considered or should be considering in an easier to read format. I have also included T-DROP FAQ's for those tenured members (28 – 30 years of service) who may not quite be ready to retire but are looking for an option to "build a savings account" toward their future retirement. You should have three total attachments to this update.

Through the ATRS executive director updates and FAQ's, ATRS hopes to keep members better informed and up-to date! If you have any suggestions on topics or improvements that you think ATRS should consider, then feel free to call or an email to me with your suggestions.

If you have questions or need more information, please feel free to call me on my direct line at (501) 682-1820, my cell (501) 318-5998, or email me at georgeh@artrs.gov. In addition, if you use Twitter, you can follow events at ATRS and issues of interest by finding the Twitter ID of ATRS or find George Hopkins in the Twitter directory or follow ATRS on our Facebook page, on at <http://www.facebook.com/arkansasteacherretirementsystem> under the name of Arkansas Teacher Retirement System. Also remember that you can go to the ATRS website at **www.artrs.gov** and sign up to get updates from ATRS automatically on your public or private email address, or both. The update attached to this email is also available on the ATRS website under executive director updates. Over 3,100 people have already signed up to receive this type of email update and other ATRS information via this email list. Feel free to sign up for updates on the ATRS website.

Respectfully,

George Hopkins